

\$800,000 Federal Award will Prevent Sewer Rate Increase

Saugerties, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today joined Saugerties officials to outline how \$800,000 in federal funds he secured at the request of the Village will be used to repair 100 year old sewer lines. A 2005 report shows that without new lining and other repairs the sewers may leak and contaminate the Esopus Creek.

"We've been requesting funding from the state to repair these lines in every year since we discovered the problem in 2005," said Victor Cornelius, Grants Manager for the Village. "Until we went to Congressman Hinchey, it looked like we were going to have to raise sewer rates to fund the project locally, or simply allow the problem to get worse and risk contaminating the Esopus. What Maurice did here was absolutely essential."

In 2003, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation urged the Village of Saugerties to conduct an analysis of wastewater collection lines that were built in 1902. The Village contracted with the engineering firm Brinnier and Larios to conduct a study, which determined the need for substantial and costly repairs. A 2005 village report was filed with New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation Intended Use Plan to generate New York State funding. Updated reports were filed in 2007, 2008, 2009, but the state failed to fund the project, prompting the Village to request federal funding in 2009.

"The sewer lines that are being repaired are over 100 years old. Were they to leak, raw sewage could spill into the creek and contaminate the Esopus Creek," said Hinchey. When Village officials alerted me to this situation and requested federal resources to address the problem, I worked to secure the \$800,000 federal funds they requested. The need couldn't have been more obvious."

In their request for federal funds, made in January 2009, Village officials identified three sections of sewer lines that were badly in need of repair: a portion of the original system running from Route 9W from Barclay Street south to Overbaugh Street; a second portion of the sanitary system on Route 9W or Partition Street (Main Street to bridge) in the center of the business district of the Village of Saugerties; and a third major portion of the original system that extends from Myers Lane to West Bridge Street thru easements. The village later determined that the federal funds would be used to repair the lines that extend from Myers Lane to West Bridge

street, which are in the most urgent need of repair because of their proximity to the Esopus. All work will be done on existing wastewater lines and will not benefit any new projects.

"Some right wing bloggers, along with a local newspaper, have wrongly insinuated that somehow these funds are being used to help the Partition Street Project," said Alex Wade, Director of Special Projects for the Village. "Nothing could be more ridiculous. The fact is, we requested these funds from the state to repair 100 year old sewer lines before the Partition Street Project was even initiated. Furthermore, the developer of that project has always planned to build new lines directly into the existing pump station, which is adjacent to the property. The grant Congressman Hinchey secured was for upgrading 100 year old infrastructure - period, end of story. There isn't even any room for argument here - these reporters and bloggers just got it wrong."

The village intends to utilize the cured in place pipe (CIPP) method of rehabilitating the wastewater lines. Under this procedure, the sewers are jet cleaned and have a cured in place liner installed within the sewer main. All work, except major repairs, is accomplished without excavation, through existing manholes. This method of rehabilitating sewers is very cost effective and much less disruptive than replacing sewers by previously used methods.

The congressman used his position on the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee to have the funds included as part of the fiscal year 2010 Interior Appropriations bill. The measure was approved by the Senate and signed into law by President Obama.